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RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0176  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000560

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/E AND AF/RSA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#) [SO](#) [EG](#) [AU](#) [LY](#)

SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: A/S CARSON'S MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN FOREIGN  
MINISTER AHMED ABOUL GHEIT

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CLASSIFIED BY: Gene A. Cretz, Ambassador, US Embassy Tripoli,  
Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit agreed with Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson's assessment that Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was the victim of an ongoing proxy war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In a July 2 meeting on the margins of the African Union (AU) Summit, Aboul Gheit told A/S Carson that Egypt was not in a position to offer Somalia any lethal weapons to fight al-Shabaab, but had promised TFG President Sheikh Sharif training opportunities in Egypt for loyal TFG police units in May. Aboul Gheit reiterated the offer on July 1 but was awaiting Somalia's response. The minister forcefully urged the USG to cut off al-Shabaab's funding via Eritrea "at the source" in Qatar and other Gulf countries, arguing that only the USG had the leverage and relationship to force governments there to comply with international interests. End summary.

SOMALIA: NEED TO CUT OFF ERITREAN AND QATARI SUPPORT FOR  
AL-SHABAAB

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[¶2.](#) (C) A/S Johnnie Carson met Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on the second morning of the AU Summit in Sirte, Libya. Peppering A/S Carson with questions about the USG's assessment of the situation in Somalia, he pointedly asked whether the TFG could survive long enough for adequate support to be delivered to help the TFG hold on and then al-Shabaab. A/S Carson answered that their only chance was maximum effort and increased support, coupled with ending al-Shabaab's financing by Eritrea through pressure and sanctions on their leadership. Aboul Gheit questioned whether countries like China or Russia would comply with AU or UN calls to sanction Eritrean leaders. He told A/S Carson that the AU Peace and Security Commission had drafted language on sanctions that he expected would be adopted.

[¶3.](#) (S) Noting the deteriorating conditions in Somalia and the rise of Islamist influence, A/S Carson said that urgent intervention was needed to prevent an even worse situation.

Aboul Gheit and A/S Carson agreed that Eritrea's support of al-Shabaab was not rooted in their support for extremism but rather their ongoing tensions and proxy war with Ethiopia. Aboul Gheit asked A/S Carson whether Eritrea was solely responsible or whether Gulf countries bore some blame for the current situation. A/S Carson responded that the USG knew that the Emir of Qatar was a principal supporter of Eritrea.

14. (C) Asking whether the State Department was taking that message to "the Gates Foundation, Congress, and CENTCOM", Aboul Gheit forcefully urged the USG to take a hard line against Qatar's support for President Isaias and, indirectly, al-Shabaab. According to Aboul Gheit, the U.S. is the only actor that has the leverage to force Qatar to fall in line "or else". Egypt can't influence Qatar's behavior, but the U.S. -- with its CIA and airbase in Qatar -- can convince the Emir that he is endangering U.S. and regional interests by destabilizing Somalia. Encouraging power politics, Aboul Gheit stated that should pressure not work, the U.S. could threaten Qatar into compliance. The minister said that official support from Qatar was not the only danger, rather zealots campaigning around Gulf mosques pleading, "pay for Somalia" could raise small sums from individual sympathizers that could quickly reach USD \$100,000 -- more than enough to fight in a small country.

#### EGYPT OFFERS TRAINING TO LOYAL TFG UNITS

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15. (C) The Egyptians hosted TFG President Sheik Sharif in early May and offered training for vetted and loyal TFG units, to include artillery and urban combat training. Aboul Gheit said he had reiterated the offer to Sharif on July 1 but worried that Sharif would be faced with so much trouble upon departing Sirte that he would be unable to furnish a list to the GOE. A/S Carson described the USG's unprecedented support for TFG forces in the form of cash for salaries, weapons, and ammunition. Aboul Gheit reported that Egypt was not in a position to offer lethal weapons and said he was worried by the repeated refrain

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from TFG leaders that they have no money -- expressing hesitation that funds were being skimmed by unscrupulous commanders and political leaders. A/S Carson said he had been pleased to meet Sharif in a July 1 meeting (septel); Aboul Gheit said Sharif was reasonable but cautioned A/S Carson that the TFG was "not like you and me" but rather an organization filled with Islamist leaders. Called away to another meeting, the Foreign Minister invited A/S Carson to visit Cairo soon to meet and coordinate with Egyptian diplomatic and intelligence leaders on the situation in Somalia.

16. (U) A/S Carson has approved this message.  
CRETZ